



Administrative Report

Mayor Eddie Moran

TO: City Council
FROM: William M. Heim, Managing Director
PREPARED BY: Maritza Loaiza, Special Assistant
MEETING DATE: October 24, 2022
AGENDA MEMO DATE: October 19, 2022

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

- The Community Development Director continues to work on the City's scope of work for the development of the Transient Oriented District (TOD). The City submitted ten potential locations for passenger rail stations for review by the executive committee composed of members from Berks Alliance, GRCA, and Berks County Community Foundation. The list was narrowed to eight locations after further review. The next step is the development of the RFP.
- Community Development submitted a grant application through the **Lincoln Institute of Land Policy**. It is an 18-month grant that would start in January 2023 if awarded. The grant will help improve quality of life through stewardship of land use, such as creating accessible, livable wage employment and affordable and safe housing. We can achieve this through targeted blight remediation strategies to improve access to housing and increase property values, as well as streetscape and façade programs to beautify the neighborhood and promote public safety.

FINANCE:

- The Finance Director met with all organizations awarded ARPA Grant Funding from the City on October 13th and 14th. Day and evening sessions were offered to accommodate all recipient's schedules. During the session, ZA reviewed the funding agreement, process, and expectations before funding is released.

- The Finance Department’s Citizens Service Center provided the following updates:
 - CSC Manager attended the Berks Earned Income Tax Collectors meeting on September 29th, in which all municipalities shared that taxes continue on an upward trend.
 - The CSC Manager shared that the City’s 2021 Public Utility Realty Tax (PURTA) distribution of \$57,676.84 was received.
 - The CSC will forward the City’s 2022 unpaid Business License information to collections within the next month to proactively take care of delinquencies before the upcoming software conversion. The 2023 Business License billing will begin before the end of the year, as done in the past.

- The Finance Department’s Accounting Division provided the following updates:
 - The Accounting Manager and Accounts Payable Clerk attended and completed the new form 1099 reporting training.
 - The Accounting Division electronically collects all internal lease and rental contracts to comply with FASB statement 87, which goes into effect in 2022.
 - The Accounting Division continues to prepare for:
 - 1099 filing required by January 31, 2023
 - Year-end closeout process
 - 2023 budget - general ledger posting process

- The Finance Department’s Purchasing Division provided the following updates related to projects:
 - Penn Square Properties RFP – The Committee is reviewing the Letter Of Intent with legal counsel.
 - City Hall Radio Booster Project (Fire Department) – Bids are due on November 1st.
 - General Engineering Services – Technical specifications will mainly be for Public Works as needed for upcoming City projects. Bids are due on October 28th.

- The City Controller continues work on various items, such as:
 - Prep work for impending State pension audit
 - Lessor and lessee accounting information
 - Software Accounting for 2023
 - Propriety funds cleanup

- The Finance Department provided the following updates on the AHL Grant activities:
 - Community-Accessible Testing & Education (CATE) vaccine clinic is scheduled to run through November.

- Health Literacy Questionnaire (HLQ) survey is ongoing. 400+ paper responses have been collected. The goal is set at 1,000.
- The Community Engagement Coordinator continues to do outreach with community organizations, scheduling approximately three per month in addition to Latino Connection coordinated events.
- Social media content creation is an ongoing collaborative effort with Latino Connection. The official logo design is almost finalized. Website development is in progress, and planning for the unveiling/go-live of the website is currently underway.
- Upcoming Grant-related activities include:
 - October 20th – Glenside Housing Complex – food distribution event
 - October 28th – Halloween on Penn Street with Mayor Moran

FIRE:

- The Reading Fire Department was in attendance at the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation Memorial service in Emmitsburg, MD, on the weekend of October 7th. Firefighter/EMT Mark “Dewey” Kulp was one of 148 firefighters added to the national memorial.
- RFD conducted oral interviews for the 2nd Deputy Chief and Lieutenants positions at the Fire Training Center on October 4th. A final list was completed and certified on October 18th.

RFD Entry-level interviews will be held on October 17th at the Fire Training Center from 8am-2pm.

HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION:

- Since last reported, HRC has:
 - 483 total rent and utility assistance applications were received.
 - 358 applications for rental assistance were facing evictions.
 - 5 applications were withdrawn by tenants
 - 9 applications were denied due to not meeting the program requirements
 - 20 applicants were not actively facing eviction
 - 6 applicants resided outside of the City but within the County
 - 78 applications for utility assistance.
 - 2 applications were denied for exceeding HUD’s income guidelines
 - 4 application was denied due to not meeting program requirements
 - 1 application was withdrawn by the applicant

HUMAN RESOURCES:

- The Human Resource Department would like to welcome the following new employees to the City of Reading organization:
 - Dahiana Artiles-Hernandez, Secretary/Building & Trades, as of October 3rd.
 - Margaret DeAntonio, Paralegal/Office Manager, as of October 10th.
 - Michael Bendetti, Engineering Aide III, as of October 17th.
- On October 1st the entry written exam for the Police Department was administered. Of 36 that took the test, 23 passed the exam with a 70% or higher. Applications were due to Human Resources by October 14th, and the physical agility exam will be held on October 23rd.

LIBRARY:

- The Reading Public Library Children's Play Spaces at the Main Branch are increasingly popular. Parents, therapists, and playdates utilize the play areas. In September, 445 children used this play area at the library, the highest use in 2022.
- The RPL's Senior Outreach services added two new locations; Hummingbird Hill and The Villa. Services were provided to 239 patrons in the month of September.
- The RPL's Reference Librarians visited Alvernia's Collegetowne campus to provide students with a presentation of library resources they have available for students to access.
- \$147,175 was raised during the Reading Public Library's Annual Cocktails and Classics fundraiser, which is a 9% increase from prior years. \$20,000 of the money raised will go toward hotspots for public use.

POLICE:

- The Reading Police Department continues to work on the VSU Expansion project. New cameras and equipment sites have been identified, and agreements with the community partners to host the equipment are being completed.
- The Reading Police reports the gate to block access to the trail near the Buttonwood Street Bridge has been ordered, and delivery and installation should occur in 2-4 weeks.

PUBLIC WORKS:

- Public Works staff has also completed:
 - 35 sites were cleaned up, primarily illegal dumping sites, which resulted in 232 bags of trash and litter, 15 bags of yard waste, 34 bulk items, 47 tires, and 12 televisions.
 - 16 graffiti abatement projects from various locations throughout the City
 - 11 dead animals were picked up
 - 32 storm drains were cleaned out

- Public Works Clean City Coordinator reports:
 - 3 cleanup events with 9 volunteers were held, which resulted in the collection of 27 bags of trash and litter, 5 televisions, 8 tires, 4 bulk items.
 - 23 new Adopt-A-Block program participants were identified. Of those 23 signed up, 20 are residents and 3 are businesses.
- Public Works Sustainability Manager:
 - Attended the PA Association of Environmental Professionals (PAEP) Communities, Corridors, & Connections Conference in State College.
 - Appeared on “Building Greener” with Bill Vitale (City EAC board member) and Amanda Hanbury (Met Ed/CLEAResult) to discuss energy efficiency programs and support offered through Met-Ed for single-family and multifamily homes.